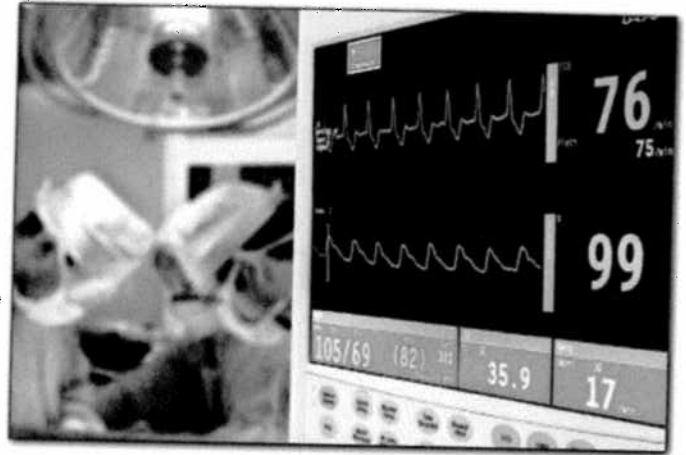


Background Information on Legislation for Primary Stroke Center Designation

What is a Primary Stroke Center (PSC)?

A PSC is a hospital equipped to quickly diagnose, treat and provide early rehabilitation to stroke victims. PSC's facilitate effective and 'rapid-response' treatment.

Rapid-response treatment for stroke can lessen a stroke's debilitating effects, prevent further damage to the brain, reduce medical costs, and reduce the medical and physical complications following a stroke. Recent peer-reviewed literature has demonstrated that stroke center designation and selective triage of acute stroke patients improve the quality of care, including access to timely thrombolytic therapy (t-PA). (Neurology 2006).



What is Primary Stroke Center Designation?

The Joint Commission (the accreditation entity for hospitals) developed a Primary Stroke Center Certification Program based on the work of the Brain Attack Coalition and the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association. Hospitals are evaluated and receive a certification decision based on an assessment of the following:



Compliance with consensus-based national standards;

Effective use of primary stroke center recommendations and clinical practice guidelines to manage and optimize care; and

Performance measurement and improvement activities.

Recommendations for Legislation:

1. The Legislature should adopt legislation to establish PSCs on the state level to improve stroke patient care in New Mexico.
2. The Joint Commission certification process or a process of equal rigor based on nationally recognized standards should be required to certify that designated PSCs meet appropriate criteria.

Why is Primary Stroke Center Legislation Important in New Mexico?

Legislation in New Mexico allowing the Department of Health to recognize PSC's is extremely important because it will **define guidelines** for PSCs on the state level, giving **New Mexico hospitals more opportunities** to be recognized as facilities that **can give life saving diagnoses and treatment**.